

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 AGR-10 IGA-01 AID-05 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-02 USIA-15 PRS-01 SP-02

COME-00 OMB-01 TRSE-00 IO-10 HEW-06 /078 W

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FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0617

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E.O. 1165" N/A

TAGS: AGR, HO

SUBJ: AGRICULTURE: CROP FAILURE REPORT (1)

REF: LAGAR-SHULER MEMO JUNE 25

SUMMARY:

1. HONDURAN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, ESSENTIAL FOR THE POST-HURRICANE FIFI DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM, IS SERIOUSLY AFFEC-
TED BY GENERALIZED RAINFALL SHORTAGES. CROP FAILURES IN CORN
AND BEANS, THE MAJOR STAPLES ARE REPORTED FROM SEVERAL AREAS,
BUT ACCURATE PRODUCTION ESTIMATE DATA IS NON-EXISTANT. CROP
FAILURE IS CLOSELY RELATED TO A POTENTIAL HONDURAN REQUEST
FOR PL-480 ASSISTANCE.

END SUMMARY.

2. THE OFFICE OF CLIMATOLOGY OF THE DIRECTORATE OF CIVIL
AVIATION HAS PROVIDED THE EMBASSY WITH RAINFALL DATA FOR
1974 AND THROUGH MAY OF 1975. THE STATISTICS SUPPORT THE
GENERALIZED VIEW OF DROUGHT REPORTED IN THE PRESS. OF 28
RECORDING STATIONS, ONLY FIVE VIREPORT RAINFALL MEASUREMENTS IN
MAY ABOVE THE 1974 FIGURES. 1974 WAS CONSIDERED NORMAL. RAIN-
FALL IN MAY WAS REPORTED NORMAL BY STATIONS IN CHOLUTECA, COPAN,
MORAZAN AND GRACIAS A DIOS PROVINCEYAM HOWEVER, THE BALANCE OF
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STATIONS, INCLUDING THOSE IN THE MOST PRODUCTIVE PROVINCES

OF COMAYAGUA, THE SULA AND AGUAN VALLEYS AND THE NORTH COAST LITORAL HAD RAINFALL RANGING FROM ZERO TO ONLY TWENTY EIGHT PERCENT OF NORMAL. A SUPPORTABLE GENERALIZATION IS THE RAINFALL IN MAY AND JUNE (SOME IMPROVEMENT) IS LESS THAN ONE-THIRD OF NORMAL IN MAJOR AREAS OF HONDURAS.

3. INDICATIVE THROUGH THE STATISTICS MAY BE, ACTUAL CONDITIONS MAY BE WORSE. SOME MAJOR AREAS HAVE NEVER BEEN PLANTED BECAUSE OF DRY SOIL CONDITIONS. OTHER AREAS WERE PLANTED, BUT THESE CROPS HAVE BEEN LOST THE INSUFFICIENT RAINFALL. THUNDERSHOWERS, RATHER THAN BROAD FRONTAL PATTERNS, HAVE BEEN THE SOURCE OF MOST RAINFALL TO DATE. THESE ARE LOCAL IN EXTENT. ONE EXPERT HERE NOTES THAT "THECOUTH FOURTYMAY HAVE RAIN WHILE THE NORTH FOURTY IS PARCHED." A CONCESUS IS THAT THE MOST PRODUCTIVE BASIC GRAIN REGIONS HAVE LOST UP TO FORTY PERCENT OF THE FIRST PLANTING (PRIMERA). SMALL FARM AND SUBSTANCE PLOTS HAVE BEEN HIT PARTICULARLY HARD DUE TO CONSIDERATIONS OF TERRAIN, LOSS OF SEED, AND TECHNOLOGICAL BACKWARDNESS.

4. THE EMBASSY HAS REQUESTED CROP ESTIMATES, CROP LOSSES AND GRAIN REQUIREMENTS DATA FROM THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT BANK. FURTHER INFORMATION IS BEING SOUGHT FROM AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATIONS.

SANCHEZ

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